

REPORT OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

We hereby submit to the Board of Selectmen and the citizens of Alton, the Report of the Budget Committee of the Town of Alton for 2009.

Committee members for 2009-2010:

Karen Painter Chairman
Greg Fuller, Vice Chair
Stephen Miller, Member
R. Virgil MacDonald, Member
Mark DeCoff, Member
R. Loring Carr, Selectmen's Representative
Un-named, School Board Representative

RSA32:16: Duties and Authority of the Budget Committee. In any town which has adopted the provisions of this subdivision, the Budget Committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

1. To prepare the budget as provided in RSA 32:5 to each annual or special meeting of the voters of the municipality, and if the municipality is a town, the budget of any school district wholly within the town, unless the warrant for such meetings does not propose any appropriation.
2. To confer with the governing body and bodies and other officers, department heads, and other officials, relative to estimated costs, revenues anticipated, and services performed to the extent deemed necessary by the Budget Committees be the duty of all such officers and other persons to furnish such pertinent information to the budget committee.
3. To conduct public hearings required under RSA 325, 1.
4. To forward copies of the final budgets to the clerk, or clerks, as required by RSA 32:5, VI, and in addition to deliver two copies of such budget and recommendations upon special warrant articles to the respective governing body or bodies at least 20 days before the date set for the annual or special meeting to be posted with the warrant.

In reviewing the budget our committee was mindful that through the end of 2008 and heading into 2009, the New Hampshire economy could not stay detached from the national recession, or ignore its dependence on the global economy. Our state's unemployment rate for May 2009 was 6.5 percent, a 2.8 percentage point increase from a year earlier, and our housing values have continued to decline.

Mindful of the economic challenges faced, our goal for the 2009 – 2010 budget cycle was to recommend a budget that ensured a high level of value to residents. We were looking for a responsible financial plan that balanced the Town's needs with careful consideration of the impact on taxpayers.

To reach these goals we have asked each department head to review:

1. Department's Mission
2. Funding Sources & Revenue Estimate
3. 2010 Objectives
4. 2010 Budget Highlights
5. Comprehensive Plan/Strategic Plan 2010

During the budget presentation we asked officers, department heads, and other officials to specifically address:

1. 2010 Expenditure Increases/Decreases from 2009 by Object
2. Any expenses related to:
 - a. Travel
 - b. Consultants
 - c. New Equipment
 - d. New personnel
 - e. Any salary increase given out of sequence from the wage scale
 - f. Any line items that were projected to have greater than 5% remaining at year end 2009
 - g. Any line item transfers, including, "line to" and "line from"

At this writing the committee has devoted approximately 63 hours of meeting time with officers, department heads, and other officials to review the proposed town budgets.

Our findings during these sessions were that the Board of Selectman, officers, department heads, and other officials were considerate of the financial concerns of the town's citizens, and worked diligently to prepare a budget that was mindful of the fiscal considerations, yet continued to support the infrastructure and program needs of the Town.

The committee's proposed budget for 2010 is decreased from the 2009 default budget. We are currently reviewing Warrant Articles and preparing for our Public Forums to be held on both the Town and the Alton School District budgets, and then the deliberative session.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Selectmen, officers, department heads, and other officials for their hard work and patience throughout this process. I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage all of our citizens to participate. If you cannot attend budget committee meetings our committee tapes are maintained in the library and the Budget Committee minutes available to you on the town web site; the committee is also accessible by telephone or through email. We welcome you input, questions, and opinions.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Painter, Chairman